

FOR A X'MAS BANQUET.

AFORY DRESSINGS AND APPETIZING SAUCES FOR THE DAY.

Dainty Ways of Serving Vegetables—Lobster Culiets—Mushroom Pates—Tips on Salads and Pretty Desserts.

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N the good old times," which it is the fashion to laud, but which I fancy few of us would care to exchange for the present, the modest Christmas table was that which graced under the greatest profusion of dishes. To-day the housewife is the most to be envied who can prepare the daintiest feast or can greet the eyes and palates of her guests with some pretty and novel dish, some little original wrinkle in the making of a sauce or the cooking of the time-honored turkey.

In France, it is the custom among poultry-brothers to feed their poultry for weeks beforehand on a diet composed largely of highly peppered animal food, which causes greatly to a quick growth and consequent size. In early times the French varied the flavor of their fowls by feeding them at a great cost with paste qualified with musk, anise seed, and other aromatic spices; it was a French queen who spent 1,500 francs in imparting a peculiarly delicate flavor to the livers of three geese. I once knew an aristocratic old epicure (I almost said "gourmet") who never allowed a turkey on his table that had not been fed for weeks before under his special direction. Sometimes a diet of sweet potatoes, both raw and boiled, milk and grain, was given, and again fowls with large quantities of animal food, cabbage and lettuce.

Unless you have your own poultry yard you cannot, of course, make experiments of this kind, but you can, by your skill in cooking, add such flavors as the grower has failed to impart. For the highest gastronomic effect your Christmas turkey should be of the hen variety, led to the block after a fast of twenty-four hours, broken only at the last by a spoonful of the best vinegar, after which it will die "canner," that is, the meat will be whiter, sweeter, and of a better flavor. All of this your poultry merchant will attend to for you. I know of one enterprising dealer who engaged his turkeys six weeks before Christmas, and then fed them up for special customers according to their directions.

An Italian restaurant in New York city gives a delicious flavor to his turkeys by keeping them for two days in a marinade of claret. Lay the bird in a dish just large enough to hold it and cover with a pint each of vinegar and claret and a gill of salad oil. Turn frequently that every part of the flesh may be acted on by the acid and oil. It is safe to say that mine host makes use of this secret to economize by buying old, tough birds since the effect of this treatment is to soften the fibres of the flesh as well as to flavor it.

As regards the best stuffing for a turkey there are "many men of many minds." The finest bread dressing is made of half a pound each of sweet, mild bread crumbs—the crumbs from a loaf twenty-four hours old—and nicely creamed and mashed potatoes, half a cup of minced mushrooms, four ounces of the best butter, and a seasoning of sweet marjoram, summer savory, pepper, salt, grated nutmeg, and grated lemon rind. Hold together with a beaten egg.

You can change the flavor of this by substituting for the mashed potato, stewed celery or boiled onions, or you can double the quantity of crumbs and flavor principally with a minced onion fried in butter; but when mushrooms are used, leave out the onion.

Sweet potato stuffing was the favorite of Mrs. Senator Vance of North Carolina. They must be baked in their skins and then mashed smoothly and beaten light with plenty of butter and seasonings to taste.

The wife of one of our chief justices prefers French or Italian chestnuts for stuffing. Boil or roast the nuts, peel, and fill the body of the bird. Some cooks use half a pound each of lean veal and fresh pork, at least half of the latter being fat; moisten with broth and for a good sized bird add fifty chestnuts.

An oyster stuffing is most delicious: use as much of the oyster liquor as is necessary to moisten the requisite quantity of crumbs, of which you want only half enough to fill the bird, then season highly and add oysters enough to make up the balance.

Of course a stuffing of truffles is the ne plus ultra, but as it takes at least a pound for a small turkey they are not often used.

A turkey garnished with sausage has a very festive, not to say bacchanalian appearance. Three hours before the cooking is finished festoon it with strings of link sausage; these you must turn from time to time so that every part shall be as brown as the bird itself. Let the flavor of the sausage, of course the finest, be of the mild variety. With this you will want gilet sausage made by stewing and mincing the giblets and adding them to the gravy in the pan after the fat has been removed. Thicken and color with Fournelle's ketchup.

With celery stuffing serve both a gilet and a celery sauce, and with oyster stuffing an oyster sauce.

The vegetables served at a Christmas dinner should be prepared with special reference to pleasing the eye. Although certainly not at the expense of the taste. A dainty way to serve potatoes is to prepare a quantity of mashed potatoes with less cream or milk than for plain use; let these get cold and mold compactly into the form of small apples; they should be no larger than lady apples; make a slight indentation in the stem end, roll in crumbs, then in egg, and again in crumbs, and stand in the ice box until wanted. A few moments before serving immerse them until a golden brown in very hot dripping or lard, using a wire basket. Lay on a napkin on a hot dish and insert the stem of an apple or a tiny crust of bread shaped like a stem. Very small white onions browned in butter and then cooked in stock until done are very savory.

Celery fritters make a delicate little course. The white stalks of celery cut in two-inch lengths are boiled until tender in salted water. Drain and dip in a batter made from the yolk of a raw egg, a tablespoonful of salad oil or melted butter, four ounces of flour, and cold water enough to make it of the right consistency. The moment before using stir in the whipped white of the egg.

Sweet potatoes should not make their appearance as a natural, but when boiled, cut in eighths and baked with plenty of sweet melted butter while browning in a

quick oven they are delicious. Small, even-sized tubers are also nice when baked, after which cut a slice off the top, lay the top of course, on its side, scoop out the inside, mash with plenty of melted butter and season with salt and white pepper and return to the case, which should not have been allowed to scorch in cooking. Sweet potatoes au caramel is almost a confection, but they will please any southern guests whom you may happen to have at your table. Boil, pare, cut in carrels and lay in a baking dish, season each layer with plenty of butter, a generous sprinkling of brown sugar and cinnamon and just a shake of flour; when the dish is two-thirds full dash on half a cup of hot water and bake three quarters of an hour in a moderate oven.

If I tell you of lobster culiets now it is because there is not meant to be any method in the madness of this gossip about Christmas cooking. Let me say, however, that if you do serve a fish course, there is nothing nicer than this. It was originated years ago by a little woman who believed in practicing all she preached, and a large daily in her native city. He was a well-fed editor who knew what good living was, and he was so fascinated by this dainty that he ordered a column of epicurean hints for his Sunday edition. This was the beginning of her long career as a writer on gastronomy. This was "years and years ago" before the man editor edited the cooking column with a scissors in a way to make living epicures and their shoulders and those of past generations turn in their graves.

But to the culiets: Melt two ounces of butter in a saucepan and when it bubbles stir in a heaping tablespoonful of flour; cook for a minute and pour in half a pint of boiling cream and a half pound of the flesh of boiled lobster cut in dice. Stir until very hot and take from the fire. Add the beaten yolks of two eggs, a dash of cayenne, another of grated nutmeg, and salt to taste, returning to the fire and long enough to set the eggs. Butter a dish and spread on this mixture; when cold shape into culiets, dip into crumbs, then in egg, again in crumbs, and fry to a golden brown in boiling drippings. Decorate with parsley and carrels of lemon.

If a roast pig graces your Christmas table, a very pretty way to serve the necessary apple sauce is as follows: Select a number of smooth, ripe, well-colored, Baldwin pippins; polish them to the last stage of ruddiness, cut a slice off the top and scoop out the inside, leaving a wall of perhaps half an inch, enough to keep the apple in shape. Make a nice apple sauce, seasoning, flavoring it appetizingly, and fill the hollowed apples with it. Insert the stem of an apple or any bit of twig by way of a stem, and serve one to each person on a pretty dish or like a sollet on a doily laid on a pretty plate. Very finely minced orange rind is a delightful flavoring for apple sauce.

A pretty substitute for the ordinary cranberry or other jelly is made from quinces. Core, pare and have a number; cook until tender in a syrup made by boiling a cup of sugar in a pint of water; lay on a dish that can go in the oven and pour over a little of the syrup, just enough to glaze them; set in the oven until a golden brown. Meantime cook the skins and cores until tender in a very little water; squeeze through a jelly bag and add to the syrup in which the quinces were cooked, allowing fifteen minutes. Then transfer the quinces to the dish in which they are to go to the table, and pour over this the jelly which is of a beautiful pink color. The individual and delicious flavor of the quinces makes this a very acceptable accompaniment to any kind of poultry or game.

I do not need to consult Soyer or Francatelli for a recipe for chicken pie. I am sure when you have tried that of an old cook from whom you will want no other. The best dish to cook it in is a large brown "nappy" holding not less than three quarts. Kill the chickens several days before wanted and see that they be tender and well-grown, weighing from six to seven pounds the pair. You will want the best parts of four chickens. Joint as for fricassee, laying aside the first and second joints, the breast and upper joints of the wings for your pie, and making a stock from the remainder with a knuckle of veal or some bones of cold roast veal. Cook the jointed birds with four ounces of salt pork cut in strips in just enough boiling water to cover; simmer slowly and season when half done. When tender butter the dish, lay in the chicken and pork, reasoning each layer and adding a dozen little force meat balls made from bread crumbs, thyme, savory, parsley, salt and pepper and some of the finely minced chicken and veal used in making the stock, which must be taken from the stock pot for that purpose as soon as tender. Cover the top with a good paste, at least half an inch thick, cut a hole in the centre and pour in half a pint of stock. When half baked add more stock. Bake this the day before Christmas. It will bear heating, or it will be delicious served cold for a late supper.

For a small Christmas dinner a pair of tender ducklings may be substituted for the regulation turkey. A very tasteful dressing is made by mixing a minced onion that has been fried in butter with two cupsful of crumbs, a tablespoonful of butter, and half a cupful of thick, stewed tomatoes. Season highly. Baste every few minutes and roast rare. Skim the fat from the gravy in the pan, add the stewed giblets and chicken and season. A tart jelly-like currant or plum, or spiced plums should accompany it.

Mushroom pates are one of those delightful little on rees which you must only indulge in if you are blest with a good digestion. You can order the small round shells at any fancy bakery. To make the filling cut small the contents of a can of mushrooms or a pint of fresh; simmer for ten minutes in broth, preferably chicken; season with salt and pepper; add a gill of rich cream and chicken with flour wet with cold water. A bit of cayenne or paprika adds the requisite flavor.

By the way, speaking of paprika or Hungarian red pepper, it would be well if before the holidays, you should make yourself acquainted with its merits. Thomas J. Murray, the renowned caterer and writer on gastronomy, asserts that Americans would be a less dyspeptic race if they would use this article freely.

You can, by paying a little attention to it, make your salad a delightful little surprise. At the South and in San Francisco you can have fresh, ripe tomatoes without being a millionaire. Skin these, one for each person, by a quick bath in boiling water; hold for an instant under cold water and the skin will peel off easily; remove the centers and set the shells in the ice box until you are ready to serve when they should be filled with celery cut in dice and mixed with seasoning and a mayonnaise. Set each tomato in a little nest of ice or four inner leaves of lettuce and put a small spoonful of thick mayonnaise on top. Tomatoes are nice prepared in the same way with cress instead of celery. A celery mayonnaise is an excellent salad. If your mayonnaise is a modest one and you cannot compass a sorbet, substitute shaddock. Cut through each one in half crosswise, severing it not from pole to pole, but at the equator if I may be allowed this illustration.

tion. This will make it easy for you, with a small silver spoon, to extract all the seeds. Be careful to do this thoroughly. Now you may treat them in any one of the ways mentioned below: Fill the seed vessels with sifted, powdered sugar and set on the ice until very cold.

Serape out the pulp carefully and mix that of each half orange with a tablespoonful of sugar and one of claret; return it to the shell and chill thoroughly. Or, mix the pulp with powdered sugar, sherry and a few drops of curacao. Setting aside my prohibition principles the first way of serving is my favorite. Shaddocks are very beautiful and at the season or in the localities where they can be obtained cheaply, one would do well to use them largely. They make an excellent first course for breakfast or lunch, or a midway course for a dinner.

Pumpkin and mince pies are to heavy a dessert for a holiday feast, although the habit of serving them may have so strong a hold upon us that we may feel it necessary to offer them. A Neesbrode or any kind of a frozen pudding is far more tempting. A very delicate dessert which any one possessing a freezer can make, requires that one quart of milk shall be brought to a boil, when a teaspoonful of arrow root, wet with milk, must be stirred in; pour this over the well-beaten yolks of six eggs and stir smooth; add any kind of preserved or branded fruits cut in bits; bits of citron and orange-peel; stoned raisins, bits of fruit cake, some candied fruits cut small—at least a pint in all—and sweeten to taste; add half a glass of

Your Uncle Fuller's Diary.



THE approach of Christmas suggests the question whether it will snow during the festive week. Everybody wants it to snow, of course. It doesn't seem like Christmas unless it snows. Now at this writing it's too early to look to the prognosticator in Washington for an accurate forecast. I've been studying the subject right closely for my own satisfaction. I think it's going to snow. To tell the truth, I haven't very much faith in the weather prophet. He keeps telling us to get out our umbrellas and kossamers when the shires and spoils so many pretty bonnets by telegraphing down here, "Fair and warmer to-morrow." I've lost confidence in him. The weather prophet gets things mixed. Somebody gives him the cold shoulder, and he immediately

sells. That night about two o'clock came the news over the wires that the ceremonies took place in a blinding snowstorm. There weren't any snow cuts and I couldn't illustrate the news. Ever since that time, I've been shy of the government prognosticator.

The Centenary Methodist church has my heartiest approbation in their attitude towards promiscuous church weddings. A large proportion of the female population of Richmond seems to have run wild on the subject of church weddings. Just let it be known that a couple will be married at the sanctuary and there'll be no lack of spectators. The fact that the bridal pair are absolutely unknown to the greater part of the witnesses seems to make no difference. The craze has gotten to be positively serious. I attended a wedding not long since. There were two other nuptials in that part of the town on the same night. Folks went to one, gathered up quite a large delegation for the second, and by the time they got to the third there was a small size swarm of curious humanity awaiting the bridal party. All kinds of remarks were made at the church door.

"I wonder if she'll wear orange blossoms," said an enthusiastic young woman. "I bet she doesn't carry anything but common roses," speculated a bold gossip, loud enough to be heard half way across the street.

"Didn't issue any invitations," ventured an aesthetic miss. "Shouldn't be surprised if she wore a calico dress."

A number of other similar criticisms forced me to the opinion that some of those present classified comedy shows.



GOOD CHRISTMAS CHEER.

The Chief of the Merry-Makers comes laden with comfort and joy, crowned with a wreath of holly.

sherry wine and a spoonful of brandy and freeze.

The prettiest dessert I ever saw was also the simplest, although requiring considerable trouble. Choose a number of smooth, fair-skinned oranges and cut a piece the size of a cent from the stem end, with a small wooden mustard spoon extract all the pulp, being very careful not to puncture the skin or make a hole in the opposite end. Throw the skins in water to extract any bitter flavor, while you make several kinds of gelatine, using Cooper's gelatine and favoring with pineapple, lemon, orange, banana or wine.

Stand the shells upon small cups to keep them upright and fill with the jelly which must be cooled but not stiff; set away over night. The next day cut them in halves, using a very sharp knife, and arrange on a pretty dish, decorate with orange leaves, sunflowers or flowers. They make very handsome center pieces.

Do not let any of the minor attendants of the feast be wanting. The saltedmonds or pea-nuts—the cheese straws to pass with the celery, or falling these, thin biscuits, toasted and spread with grated cheese—the dishes of nuts and apples which you will have for the sake of the children, and such like, and last of all the perfect cup of cafe noir.

ALICE CHITTENDEN.

In the court-yard of the palace at Versailles is a clock with one hand, called "L'Horloge de la Mort du Roi." It contains no works, but consists merely of a face in the form of a king surrounded by rays. On the death of a king the hand is set to the moment of his demise, and remains unaltered till his successor has reigned in the grave. This custom originated under Louis XIII., and continued till the revolution. It was revived on the death of Louis XVIII., and the hand still continues fixed on the precise moment of that monarch's death.

wires to Richmond to hoist the cold wave flag. As a general rule, however, he can tell when it's going to be cold. That's easy enough. It's doing something like this: The thermometer registers 29 degrees below zero in Montana. A man in that locality who has long whiskers and a philanthropic disposition notices the wind blowing eastward. He has a tender love for the whistled fraternity generally, and at once sends a message telling some friend with chin appendages not to amputate them; that the cold wave is coming. The whistled individual makes public the contents of the telegram, and immediately the white and black flag goes up. That's the way I tell when there's going to be a cold wave.

I don't think I ever failed to predict the weather, except once, and that was because I didn't interpret the language correctly. 'Twas only a short time since, I predicted "fair and very warm to-morrow," upon the receipt of this telegram:

"RIO VIA LONDON.—Special to Uncle Fuller.—Strong wind blowing north. Things very warm down here."

But it turned biting cold the next day, and somebody said your Uncle Fuller's Weather Bureau was no good. About six hours later another telegram came: "RIO VIA LONDON.—Special to Uncle Fuller.—Later wind still north. Things approaching fever heat. Big fight expected hourly."

Anyhow I've been figuring out some astronomical calculations. I think it's going to snow Christmas.

Speaking about the weather just reminds me of when I trusted the prognosticator and got into a close corner. There was going to be a big outdoor celebration. I had the cuts to illustrate the doings. The morning before the celebration, a forecast said it was going to rain the next day. I at once wired for special cuts with the people standing under umbrellas, and thought I was fixed.

circuses and weddings together. I almost congratulated myself on being a bachelor, and made a resolution on being that I'd never get married at church. When the doors of the sanctuary were thrown open there was a wild rush for the interior. People got themselves jostled painfully in the shuffle, and those wearing tight shoes had their feet trampled upon unmercifully. The gallery was the most popular place from which to view the spectacle, and a general scramble for the front row of seats ensued. Some leaned over the railing so far I feared it would be necessary to summon the ambulance before the nuptial knot could be tied. When the bridal party arrived numbers of people boiling over with a vulgar curiosity stood up on the benches, submitted rude criticisms for the benefit of their neighbors, and made themselves generally disagreeable, until one felt as though one would rather remain single forever than to be in that groom's or bride's place.

This kind of behavior is becoming quite common, and is receiving, as it should, the severe censure of many of the best people in the city. Church weddings are consequently rapidly giving place to quiet home marriages.

At one church-wedding, this winter, the entire back of a bench was broken off by a rough scramble on the part of the spectators. There's a link to all things, and the Centenary Methodist people did an excellent thing when they lead the way in prohibiting promiscuous weddings in that sanctuary. It is understood that other churches will follow this good example.

People say they can't give many Christmas presents this year, because of the money stringency. Oh, that "Financial Depression!" Everybody complains of not having any money, and even the government is trying to manufacture some few measures whereby to raise a little lucre.

I think I can give them a pointer. Dean Swift first made the proposition. It's a good idea, and any number of shrews could be raised. The theory in a nut shell is to tax female loveliness, and let each woman rate her own charms. What a sermon on tariff! Revenue on choice champagne and select Havana cigars could be abolished. Now, everybody knows that most of the women want to be considered pretty. They would pay a high tax for this privilege. Of course, the revenue list would have to be published every month, so as to know who is really budding forth into a great beauty. People wouldn't then judge from a heavy suit of golden hair, a pair of "deeply, dazily, beautifully blue" eyes, a dainty hand, a tempting mouth, or a wistful smile. Oh, no. The question would be decided by referring to the tax list. What a blessing it would be! The treasury would soon be growing with coin, protective tariff could go to the deuce, and the country would prosper wonderfully at the hands of the women. I simply throw out this suggestion for the consideration of those fellows in Congress who are wont to wrangle by the week over the tariff question, believing, as I do, the plan would appeal to the vain members of the weaker sex to restore the country to a period of financial prosperity.

Before winding up these idle thoughts I wish to caution that class of individuals who usually celebrate Christmas after a typical modern fashion to be careful. When I was a young man we all took our little Sherry cobbler, or hot "Tom and Jerry" on Christmas day. If anybody took an overdose, however, and suffered from a certain physical irregularity in consequence, it was commonly purely unintentional. Nowadays it seems that things are different. For the last few years I've studied this subject with great care, and I learned that there are various degrees of "loadom." There is the plain, rough-and-tumble foot-ball jag; then the Thanksgiving jag which is slightly superior in dimension. Several other degrees of the madly come next, and the climax is reached in the Christmas jag which is nothing less than a gigantic jag of joy, a minute description of which I do not feel equal to at the present writing. Sufficient to say this is a delirious, wild jag achieved through malice of forethought. I've been a boy, and understand how his buoyant spirit can be prevailed upon in times of festivity to slightly over-rate his capacity. But when it comes to lifting a fellow into a cab as though he were an invalid, and removing his raiment for the night lest he sleep in his shoes, why count me out.

You may not believe it, but I have it from trustworthy authority that last Christmas a fellow right here in Richmond got on a tremendous eggnog jag, which, by the way, they tell me is one of the most effective in breaking up dinner parties. The eggs used on this occasion were not so fresh as they might have been, however, and the effects, I'm told, were very remarkable. It is said that the fellow ambled about town crowing every now and then. He somehow got it into his head that he was a rooster. This ought to be a caution to the liberal imbibers.

YOUR UNCLE FULLER.

A Hard-Times Christmas.

It ought not to be indispensable to a hearty appreciation of Christmas that one's balance at the bank should be on the right side, but practically when the balance is not where it should be it strains one's self-control a little to meet the holidays with glee. The balance is pretty generally unsatisfactory this year, but Christmas is coming just the same, and one must face the music always, even when it is Christmas carols. This year's carols will be hailed joyously by some of us, and welcomed complacently at least by others, but a great multitude will turn towards their faces in which there must be less of exultation than of perplexed endurance.

It behooves as many of us as find ourselves in the latter class to take our holidays as easily as we can, doing heartily what is indispensable, and lightening all the pecuniary burdens the regulation of which is within our control. It is a great year for making a little money so a great ways. And because the very poor are so much poorer this year than in usual, and because so many people are out of work, and lack food and clothes and coal, and all the common necessities, such as turkeys, it is a great year to abate to its narrowest limits the conventional custom of swapping expensive gifts, and a good year to put one another off with presents of small cost bedecked with much love, and to spend the bulk of our surplus on things that bring larger returns. This year, at least, one's good-will toward men is better expressed by buying coats than diamonds, and if any one can't give both, and has to choose which to buy, let him buy the coats, and let the diamonds hold over. When we give expensive presents we are apt to do it more to gratify ourselves than our beneficiaries, and the people we give them to don't care so much about what they get as they do to forestall our gifts with something equally fine. If we didn't swap so much, and gave more, we would get off much cheaper, and have a good deal more real fun.

This is a good season to spend money on the very poor and the very small, the two classes which are entitled to the most consideration at Christmas-time, and with which the smallest expenditures go furthest. Bless all unprovided children, who have no conception of money value or comparative worth. It is so cheap and easy and satisfying to make a Christmas for them! Consumers of seats and sides and pocket-knives and dolls and toys and picture-books and paint-boxes, and candy in striped sticks, and oranges and gilded walnuts, and Christmas trees should have their Christmas just about as usual, and if there is any shortage in the fund that supplies their simple gratifications, it should be made good by skipping the outlay for jeweled watches, edition de luxe, and articles generally that cost more than five dollars a piece. If anyone is to suffer, it should be the well-to-do grown-ups, whose conception of Christmas is already formed, and who ought to be able to extract spiritual benefits from self-denial, even when it is forced upon them.—From Harper's Weekly.

At Christmas-Tide.

So blithe this hour, when once again
The stars glow great and fast in the sky;
So hope attuned, when human pain
Grows less, for faith that help is nigh;
So hallowed, when the angel train
With song and harp are passing by.

Once more, the rose of midnight's gloom
And the pale rose of breaking dawn,
Heaven's matchless illies wake and bloom,
And far athwart the east are drawn
The pencilled sunbeams which illumine
All pathways men must journey on.

Again the Sages and the Seers
Bend low before a little child;
And o'er the long and stormy years,
The desert spaces vast and wild,
The strife, the turmoil, and the tears,
He looks, and smiles, and the untellable

'Tis Christmas-tide! At Mary's knee
The shepherds and the princes meet!
To clasp the Infant Saviour's feet.
The Star is bright o'er land and sea;
The Gloria song is full and sweet.
Margaret E. Sangster, in Harper's Bazar.

